

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1, 8 and 15 being independent.

The independent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

Claims 1-5, 7-12, 14-16, 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Anderson '927. In addition, Claims 6, 13, 17, 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Tagawa '224 (Claims 6, 13 and 17) or Fushimi '343 (Claims 20 and 21). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a vacuum container having a first substrate and a second substrate arranged to face each other as components comprising, within the vacuum container, a spacer supported on the first substrate or the second substrate so as to maintain an interval between the first substrate and the second substrate, and a supporting member provided at a longitudinal end of the spacer and fixing the spacer within the vacuum container without the spacer contacting the supporting substrate. The spacer has a height extending in a first direction substantially perpendicular to planar surfaces of the first and second substrates and a length extending in the longitudinal direction substantially parallel with the planar substrates. As amended, Claim 1 recites that the spacer also has a vertically extending surface extending in the first direction substantially perpendicular to the planar surfaces, and the supporting member is provided at the vertically extending surface and extends in the longitudinal direction.

Claim 8 relates to a vacuum container having a first substrate and a second substrate arranged so as to face each other as components comprising, within the vacuum container, a spacer supported on the first substrate or the second substrate so as to maintain an interval between the first and second substrates, and a supporting member provided at a longitudinal end of the spacer and fixing the spacer within the vacuum container so as to provide a gap between the spacer and the supporting substrate. Claim 8 has been amended along the same lines as Claim 1 to recite that the spacer has a vertically extending surface extending in the first direction substantially perpendicular to the planar surfaces, and the supporting member is provided at the vertically extending surface and extends in the longitudinal direction.

Claim 15 relates to a method for manufacturing a vacuum container and corresponds substantially to Claim 8. Claim 15 has thus also been amended to recite that the spacer has a vertically extending surface extending in a first direction substantially perpendicular to planar surfaces of the first and second substrates, and providing a supporting member at the vertically extending surface and extending in the longitudinal direction.

Support for the claim amendments can be found, for example, in Figures 3 and 4, and the specification beginning on page 15, line 8. In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a sturdy and high performance vacuum container can be provided.

The patent to Anderson relates to a method for fixing spacers within a flat panel display which can provide substantially uniform low distribution among the spacers. Figure 8 shows a spacer 104 fixed between first and second substrates 130, 164. The Office

Action asserts that Anderson includes a supporting member 112 provided at a longitudinal end of the spacer.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, Anderson is not understood to teach or suggest, among other features, the spacer having a vertically extending surface extending in a first direction substantially perpendicular to the planar surfaces of the substrates, and the supporting member provided at the vertically extending surface and extending in the longitudinal direction. As shown in Figure 7 of Anderson, the support member 112 is disposed at a bottom surface of the spacers. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

The secondary citation to Tagawa relates to an image forming apparatus and was cited for its teaching of spacers disposed on wires for driving a plurality of electron emission elements.

The secondary citation to Fushimi relates to an image forming apparatus and was cited for its teaching of electron emission elements including a cold cathode.

Neither secondary citation, however, compensates for the deficiencies in Anderson with respect to Applicants' independent claims as discussed above. Therefore, without conceding the propriety of modifying Anderson in the manner proposed in the Office Action, such combinations still fail to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 are respectfully requested.

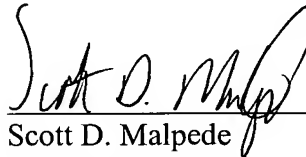
Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 8 and 15 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-

7, 9-14 and 16-21 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Malpede", is written over a horizontal line.

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